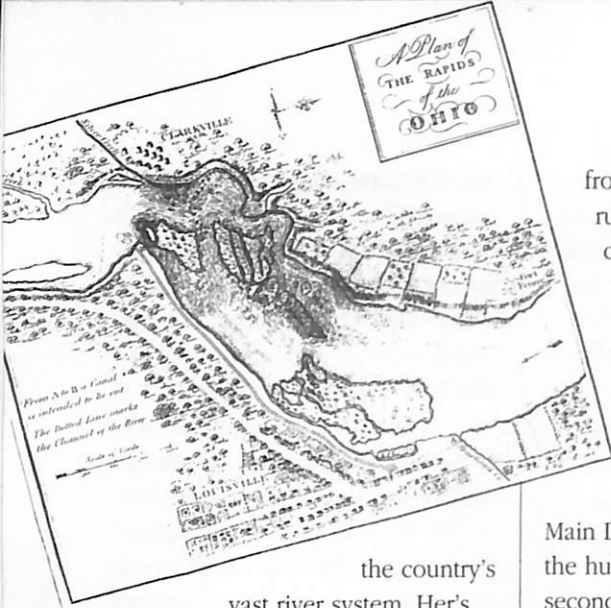




from all segments of urban and rural society in 19 states and - carried in her steel and wood the ever-flowing history of our constantly-changing nation.

Time For A Facelift

In the late 1950's, the "Avalon" underwent extensive restoration. The

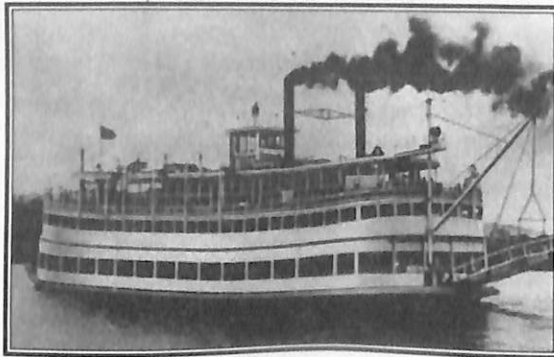
Main Deck (the first deck just above the hull) and the Ballroom Deck (the second and open-floor deck) were enclosed to lengthen the boat's operating season. Her smoke stacks were shortened so she could more easily clear low bridges over shallow rivers, and her Pilot House dome was removed and replaced with a flatter, less wind-resistant roof.

And Then...

In a sadly decrepit state and in want of loving hands, the "Avalon" was sold at auction in Cincinnati in 1962. With the encouragement and support of former Mayor Charles Farnsley, the highest bid was offered

the country's vast river system. Her's was an exciting life - visiting ports such as Omaha, Nebraska, on the Missouri River; Stillwater, Minnesota, on the St. Croix River; Peoria, Illinois, on the Illinois River; Montgomery, West Virginia, on the Kanawha River; and Nashville, Tennessee, on the Cumberland River.

This stalwart boat was an old hand on the Tennessee River from Knoxville to Chattanooga. She knew well the Mississippi between St. Paul, Minnesota, and New Orleans, Louisiana, and the Ohio River between Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and Cairo, Illinois. The "Avalon" visited people



Avalon - 1948

by Jefferson County Judge Marlow Cook, a far-dreaming man with an affection for the boat, a vision for its future as a Louisville landmark, and \$34,000 of county funds.

Her name was changed to the "Belle of Louisville," and under the care and restoration skill of a few dedicated volunteers, the boat began a new life on the south shore of the Ohio River. It took immeasurable hours of constructing, rebuilding, painting, patching, putting up and taking down, testing, wiring, and polishing to make her look and act like a paddlewheel steamer ready for excursion service again; but with the perseverance of those who believed in the project and the "never-say-die" scrounging of pieces and parts, she finally found her home and rightful place at the foot of Fourth Street - just in time to turn a proud face upriver in her first time-honored and traditional race against the river steamer "Delta Queen" on April 30, 1963.

Today she is recognized as the oldest Mississippi River-style steamboat in existence. On June 30, 1989, she was named a National Historic Landmark by the United States Department of Interior; and she is proud to be a member of a very small and elite group of only six steam-powered boats still operating on America's river system today.



Belle of Louisville - 1993

As the "Belle" steams into the 21st Century, the vigil for her well-being is constant, and those who have watched her change over the years know without question the place she holds in history and in the hearts of the people of Louisville, Kentucky.